

MARCH 2000

**Caltrans** DISTRICT 7 EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

# Inside Seven

## DISTRICT STRIPING CREW

**“DEDICATED TO THE SAFETY OF THE TRAVELING PUBLIC”**



*With the "nurse" truck in the background holding 345-gallon "totes" of a unique heated, rapid-dry paint, and the huge, specialized freeway striper vehicle, right, the District Striping Crew pose for a rare group photo. Left to right: Leo Almada; Richard Macias; Dave Omieczynski, Leadworker; Jess Hernandez, Supervisor; Richard Freeman; Richard Ayala; Manual Hernandez; John Hogan, Superintendent; Dale Mayo; and Joe Hernandez.*

**I**n order to enhance visibility and lane delineation for the traveling public, for the past four months District 7's Striping Crew has been involved in an effort to re-stripe all freeways and highways in Los Angeles and Ventura counties. Currently, all dash lines (broken lines) on Los Angeles County freeways are completed. Edge lines (solid lines) are currently being re-stripped. Efforts will then be focused on

Ventura County freeways and state highways.

Located at the Bandini/Commerce yard, the Striping Crew is part of the Special Crews Region under the direction of Larry Ornay, Maintenance Manager II. Special Crews, as the name implies, does a myriad of highly specialized work including: a Metro Electrical Crew (for freeway electronic changeable message signs, highway advisory

radio, closed-circuit televisions and vehicle detection systems); a Repair Lab Crew (which maintains and repairs electrical devices used in signals, ramp meters and lights); three Sign Crews; two Bridge Crews; one Stencil Crew; two Structural Steel Paint Crews; one Night Re-lamp Electrical Crew; seven Electrical Systems Crews; two Raised Marker Crews; one Pavement Rehabilitation Crew; a rain water

*continued on page 4*



## THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

**C**altrans Director José Medina, his Chief Deputies, Deputies and Program Managers from Headquarters recently met with all twelve District Directors at the annual statewide Strategic Planning Meeting held in Culver City. Some 50 people attended the two-day session to discuss and develop the Caltrans strategic planning process. A steering committee from Headquarters oversaw the process and groups were formed to develop the Caltrans mission statement, vision and goals.

Mr. Denzil Verardo, Chief Deputy Director, Administrative Services, State Department of Parks and Recreation, was a guest speaker and shared with the group how the strategic planning process works at his department. He also shared insight on how to use some of the processes they developed. Something very important he discovered in their process, he noted, is that, "The reason strategic planning is needed is to keep up with the pace of change."

With that in mind, the focus of discussions centered on the development and support of Caltrans' mission, vision and goals, as well as where Caltrans is headed in the future as an organization. The next step will be disseminating the information out to the workforce. An overview follows.

### MISSION

#### **"Caltrans Improves Mobility Across California."**

Caltrans' mission is to improve mobility across California, not just on freeways and highways, but to be continuously involved in all different modes of transportation — not just in moving people, but moving goods as well; and to make our transportation system more accessible throughout the entire state of California.

### VISION

#### **"California Will Have the Safest, Best Managed, Seamless Transportation System in the World."**

- Every Caltrans employee contributes to

improving mobility.

- Our workforce will be a diverse, professional and effective team that values each other's contributions.
- We will be responsive and accountable.
- We will be well-managed and serve as a model for others.
- We will work in partnership with other agencies and the public to assure that our work is done in a way that is sensitive to the needs of the environment and communities.
- We will use the latest research and technology to improve mobility for people, goods and information.
- We anticipate and plan for changes.
- The public will appreciate the quality of our products and services and the participation that they have had in our decision-making.

Caltrans' vision, now and into the future, is for California to have one of the safest, best managed and most seamless transportation systems in the world. "Seamless," meaning a system of transportation whereby a commuter can travel from home with the option of leaving the car in the driveway and walking a maximum of one-quarter mile to a bus stop, transit station or other form of transportation. From there, they can be transported to their destination in about the same time it would have taken to drive there. Caltrans is involved in this vision of seamless transportation and plans on becoming more involved in the future.

### GOALS

- **Continue to improve the effectiveness of our products, information and services.**
- **Continue to improve Caltrans' high-performing and successful workforce.**
- **Continue to communicate effectively, internally and externally.**
- **Demonstrate ethical leadership and integrity in everything we do.**
- **Be good stewards of the public's resources and transportation investments.**

As a result of the goals that have been developed, the districts will be developing action plans showing how we will implement these goals. That is why feedback is so important from each of you to your supervisor or to me personally, so that the action plans that are developed, and which will vary from district to district, will

strengthen District 7 in accomplishing our mission.

I used to think that my great-grandmother, who lived to be 105 years old, saw the greatest changes in anyone's lifetime — being born at the time of Abraham Lincoln and then seeing someone land on the moon. But seeing what has happened in recent years, I believe now that we will see much greater changes in our lifetimes in a much shorter period of time than the changes seen by my great-grandmother. So, to repeat what Mr. Verardo said, "The reason strategic planning is needed is to keep up with the pace of change."

While our existing transportation facilities are being improved to keep them the safest and the best managed, new facilities are being proposed so that we keep up with the "pace of change." All District 7 employees are part of this, our vision. Each employee plays a significant role in the Caltrans organization. And each and every job relates in some way to how mobility is improved for the commuters of the state of California; thus, the Caltrans mission. If what we are doing does not in some way help to improve mobility, we should question why we are doing it.

I cannot think of any job at District 7 that does not affect improving mobility and which is not an integral part of our mission. From Administration to Resource Management; from External Affairs to Facility Management; from Maintenance to Construction; from Design to Planning; from Right of Way to Legal; from Project Management to Operations; every job is important, each customer matters and every employee counts.

I would like all employees to take a moment to thoroughly examine our mission, vision and goals. Consider how you can make the job you are doing better — how what you do makes a difference, and how together we can better accomplish our goals. Please convey any feedback to your supervisors, or if you wish you may send your suggestions directly to me via email.

Thank you for your continued efforts in keeping California on the move — taking pride in our past; improving mobility across California with one of the safest and best managed transportation systems in the world; and keeping pace with change for our future. •

**ROBERT W. SASSAMAN**  
District Director

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

# MIKE MILES GOES THAT “EXTRA MILE”

## Maintenance Division Chief Becomes Maintenance Worker For A Day

**I**n an effort to gain additional insight and understanding into what freeway and highway Maintenance Workers deal with on a daily basis, Mike Miles, District Division Chief, Maintenance, donned a hard hat, vest and safety glasses and headed south one day for the winter, or to the South Region Alameda Maintenance Field Office, that is.

Miles took it upon himself on a recent winter's day to discover first-hand what freeway workers face day in and day out – from setting up a closure, repairing crash cushions or placing freeway warning signs, Miles did it. And he did it well. “I did a lot and I learned a lot. These Maintenance Workers really know their stuff. I have a great respect for them all,” he said.

Miles said working in the field was a very rewarding and enlightening experience. “I have always had a great appreciation for the work our Maintenance field workers perform. Now I have an even greater understanding of their hard work, dedication and spirit,” he added. Although most managers work their way up through the ranks, Miles stated that he still encourages them to become Maintenance Workers for a day to develop camaraderie and a deeper understanding and knowledge of the crew's work experiences.

Miles said that he has often felt that Maintenance Workers are the “unsung heroes,” experiencing situations many may not realize. He commented that, in addition to working next to roaring freeway traffic, often at night, workers have to deal with severe weather conditions, including snow and landslides in the winter and



*Above:*

Mike Miles sets up warning signs on the Maple Street on-ramp to the Santa Monica Freeway (10) as a Maintenance Worker for a day.

*Below:*

Mike Miles, getting ready to take off to the job site, poses near the sign on the back of an attenuator, or crash cushion, on a Caltrans Maintenance vehicle, thanking motorists for driving safely.



unbearable heat in the summer. What's more, road rage has become a very serious problem of late. “Our Maintenance Workers have a lot more to deal with than just the hard work at hand. Irate commuters have been known to yell at them, throw things at them and at times don't drive safely through work zones. What these irate commuters don't want to realize is that these workers are out there working for *them*.”

Thank you, Mike Miles, for going that “extra mile” and caring enough to experience first hand the hard work and skill that it takes to be a Caltrans Maintenance Worker. Your dedication, and the dedication of all Caltrans Maintenance Workers, is very much appreciated. Thank you all for making Caltrans proud! •



# Striping Crew

*continued from page 1*

Pumping Crew; and the Striping Crew. The duties and responsibilities of the Special Crews Region are technical and require a high degree of expertise.

According to John Hogan, Special Crews Superintendent, a 38-year veteran of Caltrans (34 years were with Special Crews alone), his crews possess a lot of expertise and skill. He said, "Collectively our Striping Crew has over 80 years experience. They are a hard-working and very dedicated crew. And they take a lot of pride in their work." Hogan will retire at the end of the month. On March 29 a special barbecue will be held in his honor at the Bandini/Maintenance yard at 11:30 a.m. (For more information, call 213-620-3316.) Dave Omieczynski, Striping Leadworker, has put in over 31 years on the crew. He proudly added, "Our entire operation is dedicated to the safety of the traveling public."

Ornay said, "The Striping Crew works as a team using innovative thinking to make their operations more efficient with the least inconvenience to the traveling public. Due to their dedication, they have been able to stripe 2,400 miles of lane line in this District in a short time frame, just over four months."

The striping operation, or striper "train" as it is called, is a 20-35 mile-per-hour moving operation performed during daylight, non-peak traffic hours. Still, the crews are working in an environment of high-speed traffic and remain cognizant of the dangers of freeway and highway work, where safety is always paramount. "Considering the immense number of hours and miles the Striping Crew works and travels each day, we have an outstanding safety record," Hogan said.

The "train" consists of a specialized team of workers and machinery involving a very large striper vehicle, a "nurse" truck, two "shadow" trucks and an advanced-warning pick-up truck. The striper is operated by two people – the driver and the controls operator. Following behind the striper is what is



*Richard Ayala, controls operator, watches carefully as the massive striper vehicle, in full operation, paints new solid edge lines on the Route 210 Freeway.*

known as the "nurse" truck. The "nurse" truck is a one-employee operation and carries extra supplies and paint. The paint comes in "totes" of 345 gallons each. And the "nurse" truck carries four of these "totes." As the striper vehicle runs out of paint, it is refilled by the "nurse" truck and pumped from one vehicle to the other. When striping solid edge lines, one "tote" will use 12 gallons to the mile. When striping broken, or dash lines, a "tote" will use three gallons to the mile.

While the striper and "nurse" truck are busy at work, two "shadow" trucks follow behind, guarding and protecting them and their occupants. The last vehicle in the "train" is the advanced-warning pick-up truck traveling behind the two "shadow" trucks, protecting all vehicles in the striping "train" by flashing an electronic message to the motoring public about the important operation ahead. Crash cushions, or attenuators (large metal boxes on the rear of each vehicle), provide extra safety measures by helping to absorb any potential impacts, thereby minimizing possible damage or injuries to the workers or to the motoring public.

Hogan explained that a special water-based, heated, rapid-dry paint product is used in the striping effort. He said that because of the heavy traffic volumes on Los Angeles and Ventura County freeways, the paint lasts an average of 12-18 months. However in mountainous areas where inclement weather conditions, snow chains and snow plow equipment cause extra wear and tear on the roadways, they are striped twice a year, shortly after spring rains and in the fall before the winter storms.

Like all highway workers, the Striping Crew faces hazards each and every workday, but remain focused on quality and safety. Ornay concluded, "When called upon to meet any challenge, the Striping Crew has always responded with a positive outlook with the objective of providing our customers with quality service. In this specialized job, these employees are faced with the day-to-day challenge of high-volume/high speed traffic, and they not only get the job done right, but they always keep the safety of the traveling public their number one priority." •



*In his office at the Bandini/Commerce yard, Larry Ornay, Maintenance Manager II, directs the operations of the Special Crews Region, including the Striping Crew, currently involved in re-striping the freeways and state highways in Los Angeles and Ventura counties.*



## Equal Opportunity Corner

# "Bring A Child To Work" Day April 27, 2000

By Cathi McMahan, Equal Opportunity Officer

On Thursday April 27, 2000, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Caltrans District 7 will celebrate "Bring a Child to Work" Day. The purpose of this event is to provide "Caltrans Kids" with a chance to visit our District and to broaden their vision of career opportunities in our Department. It also provides them with an example of a diverse, interesting and professional work environment. This event was originally started by the Ms. Foundation as "Bring Our Daughters to Work." Our event is open to Caltrans children/youth from ages 5 to 16. The Office of Equal Opportunity is coordinating this event.

Last year, members of the California Highway Patrol, Metrolink and the Los Angeles Police Department participated in the event by giving presentations and providing giveaways for the kids. Activities currently scheduled this year include the Los Angeles Los Angeles City Fire Department, Metrolink Safety and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. In addition, Maintenance equipment will be on display, a video teleconference will occur, as well as tours of the Transportation Management Center. A tentative agenda is as follows:

- 8:30 a.m. - Welcome/Orientation/Introductions
- 9:15 a.m. - Assign tour groups for planned activities
- 9:30 a.m. - Tours begin:
  - Transportation Management Center
  - Video Teleconference
  - City of Los Angeles Fire Department
  - Los Angeles Sheriff's Department
  - Caltrans Maintenance equipment display
  - Other designated activities/presentations
- 11:30 a.m. - Group lunch
- 1:00 p.m. - Adjournment of activities

The activities will take place in the District Office Building as well as the Main Street parking lot. The festivities will conclude with a luncheon for those guests that wish to participate. Parents are required to accompany their children to the various activities.

We anticipate a large number of participants at the celebration. To participate in the event, registration will begin on March 27 and conclude on April 21. Registration will occur in the Office of Equal Opportunity in Room 500-B. This year monies will be due for the luncheon at the time of registration. Details about the luncheon are being finalized and information will be available



at a later date regarding the cost and food selection. It is recommended that all participants register timely to ensure that there are sufficient "goodies" and lunches for everyone.

If you have any questions or suggestions regarding the event please contact Cathi McMahan, Equal Opportunity Officer, at 213-897-0597. •

## ... RETIREMENTS ...



Bob Sassaman, District 7 Director, left, presents Wayne Ballentine with a Quarter Century Club plaque and wishes him well on his retirement.

Wayne Ballentine, Supervisor for Engineering Services, is retiring after 39 outstanding years of service to Caltrans. Ballentine served in a number of functions, including Environmental Planning and Local Streets and Roads. Doug Failing, District Division Chief, Design said, "Wayne Ballentine is the finest gentleman I have ever worked with. He is always thinking ahead and planning out the right decisions at the right time. He will be greatly missed by all who have had the pleasure to work with him." Caltrans wishes Wayne the best of everything in his well deserved retirement." •



# Quality Corner

Caltrans THE LEADER IN QUALITY TRANSPORTATION

**R**efugio Dominguez, last year's District Quality Coordinator, would like to welcome Joe Gil, Associate Caltrans Administrator, District Asbestos Inspection and Management, as this year's new District Quality Coordinator.

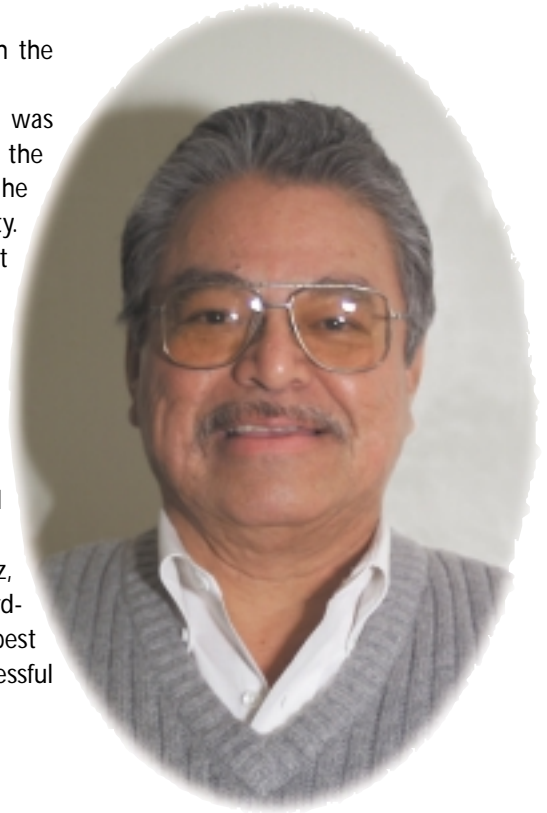
Dominguez said, "With Joe's positive attitude and pro-active approach, new goals will be achieved in the Quality Program." He added that being the Quality Coordinator this past year was a very enjoyable and rewarding experience. He said he was very fortunate to have met the Headquarters Quality personnel and various Quality Coordinators statewide and he learned about the importance of continuous improvement.

Dominguez added, "I would like to thank all the Division Coordinators for the support given to the Quality Program last year. Also, thanks to the executive staff and all the Caltrans personnel involved in the Quality team pre-

sentations and for helping to reach the goals we accomplished together."

Joe Gil said that when he was informed that he will be serving as the new District Quality Coordinator, he was glad to accept the responsibility. He said, "There is much to learn, but I am a firm believer that when utilized properly, quality improvement measures reduce costs and increase productivity. I would like to quote Oliver Wendell Holmes: "A mind once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimension."

Thank you, Refugio Dominguez, for last year's excellent and award-winning Quality Program; and the best of luck to Joe Gil for a very successful year ahead! •



*Joe Gil gets ready to take on new challenges as this year's District Quality Coordinator.*



The Division of Construction's Holiday Party was a big hit! Some 250 employees attended from all offices at Caltrans. Bob Murray of Construction was the disc jockey at the Otani Buffet. It's nice the holiday spirit is alive and well at Caltrans!



A reception honoring Tony V. Harris, Caltrans Chief Deputy Director, "A Legacy for the Millennium," was held Tuesday, February 29 in Sacramento. A "Tony Harris Scholarship Fund" was established at the event. For additional information on the scholarship fund, please call (916) 227-6056, (916) 654-7125 or (916) 274-6004.

A Highway 118 Safety Corridor from Simi Valley to Ventura was recently established to improve safety on the rural route. Four large white signs were installed alerting motorists to "Be Aware, Drive With Care." The signs were installed in Somis, Saticoy and Moorpark. The signs will remind motorists to slow down and drive with caution. The California Highway Patrol received a grant to increase enforcement and provide for public education.

Tom Almany, Supervising Transportation Engineer, Maintenance, accepted a temporary three-month position at the District 9 Bishop Maintenance office. By now, Almany is probably knee-deep in snow, or maybe just ankle-deep. Hamid Saadatnejadi, Senior Transportation Engineer, will be acting for Almany in his absence. Good luck to Tom Almany and Hamid Saadatnejadi in their temporary assignments.

Our best wishes to Jan-É Luckie who is still battling leukemia and was recently hospitalized. For information on an upcoming bone marrow drive, please contact Jean Luckie at (213) 897-1350.



Jeanne Bonfilio, Editor  
*Inside Seven*

Dear Ms. Bonfilio:

The December issue of *Inside Seven* tells what public service is all about: consideration of the public, employee pride in public service and recognition of individual accomplishments. What a wonderful way to end one century and be ready for the next.

Like other readers of *Inside Seven*, I have been getting a check each month from the State Treasurer, but for 72 years – 45 years as a state employee in the old California Division of Highways, and 27 years as a state retiree. I have seen the Highway Department, now Caltrans, come full circle.

In 1927, four years before there was CSEA, I started as an office boy at \$105 per month. The public looked to the Department to free them from the horse-and-buggy days of dirt roads. The Diamond "E" car was a Model "T" Ford. Later we entered the freeway era when we made quick decisions and built the finest transportation system in the world, but we all too often did not listen to the public and as a result we lost much of their support. Now it's gratifying to see younger employees returning to listening to the public and to political decision makers.

Your District Director, Bob Sassaman, has led District 7 this way in recent years, and now, with encouragement from Director José Medina, all of us, as well as the public, are the beneficiaries.

Wonderful! This is the way it should be.

Sincerely,  
Jess Reynolds  
Pasadena, California

---

Mr. Roscoe Good, Supervisor  
Caltrans Altadena Maintenance Yard

Dear Mr. Good:

Two of your Caltrans employees, Jack Denniston and Carl Strong, found my wallet off of the Route 210 Freeway early today, February 14. The wallet was stolen Sunday, February 13 from a home in Studio City. Mr. Denniston telephoned about 8:30 a.m. telling me of the wallet found off of the freeway. He said that Mr. Strong, with whom he worked, found it. He told me that there was no money in the wallet, but a driver's license, credit cards and a various assortment of very important information.

The wallet will be picked up as soon as possible. It is important to thank the two gentlemen who not only found the wallet, but telephoned me as quickly as they possibly could. It has taken some of the edge off the stress caused by the theft. Hopefully, the thieves only took the cash.

Thank you, Mr. Denniston and Mr. Strong, for your caring enough to see that the wallet and some of its contents were delivered to the rightful owner. You are both very caring individuals.

D. Moose  
Oxnard, California

## What's **Cookin' At Caltrans**

### IRISH CORNED BEEF AND CABBAGE

*From the kitchen of Cathi McMahan, Equal Opportunity Officer*

- 2-pound well-trimmed corned beef boneless brisket
- 1 large onion, cut into fourths
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 head green cabbage, cut into six wedges
- 2-3 potatoes, cut into fourths
- 4-6 carrots, cut into fourths
- 1-2 stalks celery, chopped



Place beef brisket in Dutch oven (or large pot). Add enough cold water just to cover beef. Add onion and garlic. Heat to boiling; reduce heat. Cover and simmer about two hours or until beef is tender. Remove to warm platter; keep warm. Skim fat from broth. Add cabbage, carrots, potatoes and celery. Heat to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer uncovered 15-30 minutes until tender. Makes about six servings.



## Inside Seven

IS PUBLISHED BY THE  
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
DISTRICT 7 • EXTERNAL AFFAIRS UNIT  
120 SOUTH SPRING STREET • ROOM 100  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012  
(213) 897-4867 • FAX (213) 897-3674  
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist07/>

EDITOR ..... JEANNE BONFILIO  
MEDIA RELATIONS CHIEF ..... MARGIE TIRITILLI  
STAFF WRITERS ..... PAT REID  
..... IVY ESTRADA  
GRAPHIC SERVICES ..... MONICA MURILLO  
PHOTOGRAPHY ..... STEVE DEVORKIN  
PRINTING ..... INTAGLIO  
DISTRIBUTION ..... IRMA LOPEZ

**Caltrans**

GRAY DAVIS  
Governor

MARIA CONTRERAS-SWEET  
Secretary - Business, Transportation and Housing Agency

JOSÉ MEDINA  
Director - California Department of Transportation



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER